

**WASHINGTON. D.C.** – House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Darrell Issa (R-CA), Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census and the National Archives Ranking Member Patrick McHenry (R-NC), Representative Lynn A. Westmoreland (R-GA) and Representative Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) have sent a letter to Commerce Secretary Gary Locke questioning the prospective hiring of former Census Director Kenneth Prewitt – the architect of the failed and unconstitutional sampling proposal put forward during the Clinton Administration. Prewitt was widely reported to be President Obama’s top pick for Census Director before rapidly withdrawing his name for consideration.

“The Commerce Department’s potential hiring of Mr. Prewitt is disquieting for a number of reasons,” the letter said. “The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform has direct legislative jurisdiction over the Census, but the exact nature of Kenneth Prewitt’s potential employment relationship – and his potential involvement with the 2010 Census – is unclear and the Committee requests clarification.”

Mr. Prewitt served as the Senate-confirmed Director of the Census Bureau from 1998-2001 and his eagerness to serve in that capacity in the Obama Administration was widely known. After abruptly removing himself from consideration, Mr. Prewitt has been quoted supporting Director of the Census Bureau-designate Robert M. Groves.

“Mr. Prewitt’s withdrawal from consideration makes his prospective reentry into operations of the 2010 Decennial seem like a backdoor way of allowing him to run the Census Bureau without having to be confirmed by the Senate,” the letter said. “Mr. Prewitt’s back door entry into the management of the Census Bureau via his hiring by the Commerce Department would be a blatant disregard of the entire Senate confirmation process and an affront to the Senate’s Constitutional Advice and Consent prerogative.”

The letter asks Commerce Secretary Locke for a detailed, written description of Mr. Prewitt’s potential position – including any and all involvement he may have in the 2010 Census – no later than May 1, 2009.

The full text of the letter is available [here](#) .